

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-41 (Cancelled)

Please add new claims:

42. (New) A method of making a joint between a first and a second component using a fastener having a first end with an adjacent flange having a diameter greater than said first tubular barrel portion and a second end having a second tubular barrel portion merging into a shoulder of a flanged part having a greater diameter than said barrel portion, characterized by the following steps:

- a) making a joint between said first end of said fastener and said first component by deforming said first tubular barrel portion radially outwardly thereby sandwiching said first component between said flange and said first tubular barrel portion;
- b) introducing said second end of said fastener through a hole in said second component by applying said second component to said first component, whereby said shoulder of said flanged part abuts said second component spacing said second component from said first component;
- c) fastening said fastener device to said second component by deforming said second tubular barrel portion radially outwardly thereby sandwiching said second component between said shoulder and said tubular barrel portion; and
- d) optionally fixedly attaching said two components at one or more positions remote from the fastener device, with step d) being performable either before or after step c).

43. (New) A method in accordance with claim 32, wherein step a) comprises one of pre-piercing said first component and piercing said first component with said first end of said fastener device.

44. (New) A method in accordance with claim 32, wherein step c) comprises bonding said fastener device to the component in said second region.

45. (New) A method in accordance with claim 32, wherein comprises welding said fastener device to the second component .

46. (New) A method in accordance with claim 32, wherein step c) comprises making a rivet joint.

47. (New) A method in accordance with claim 32, comprising the step of providing said fastener device having a first element being attachable to said first component and a second element being insertable into the second component and adjoining said elements by one of inserting a fastener through said two elements and bolting a threaded shaft of one of said elements to the other of said elements.

48. (New) A method in accordance with claim 32, comprising the step of providing said fastener component having a first element joinable to the first component a set forth in step a) and second element joinable to the second component a set forth in steps b) and c) and a third element insertable between said first and second elements prior to performing step c).

49. (New) A method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly, comprising the following steps:

forming an opening in a first of said panel members, inserting a first end portion of a fastener element having an abutment into said panel member opening and clinching said first end of said fastener element to said one of said panel members by deforming a portion of said fastener element radially outwardly over said first of said panel members positioning said panel member between said abutment and said fastener element being deformed radially outwardly;

forming an opening in a second of said of said panel members, and overlying said second of said panel members upon said first of said panel members thereby coaxially aligning said first opening in said first panel with said second opening in said second panel; inserting a second end of said fastener element having a second shoulder into said opening in said second of said panel members and clinching said second end of said fastener element to said second of said panel members by deforming a portion of said fastener element radially outwardly over said second of said panel members thereby pinching said panel member between said should and said panel member being deformed radially outwardly.

50. (New) The method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly as defined in claim 49, wherein said first end portion of said fastener element includes an axial threaded opening and said method further including attaching a component to said panel assembly by threading a bolt through said component into said axial threaded opening in said fastener element.

51. (New) The method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly as defined in claim 49, wherein said method further includes bonding or welding said panel members together spaced from said fastener element.

52. (New) The method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly as defined in claim 49, wherein said method further includes piercing said opening in said first panel member with said first end of said fastener element.

53. (New) The method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly as defined in claim 49, wherein said fastener element first and second portions are tubular and said fastener element includes a radial flange portion adjacent to but spaced from said tubular end portions, said method including inserting said tubular end portions of said fastener element through said openings in said first and second panel members and clinching said fastener member tubular end portions to said panel members by radially deforming said tubular end portions of said fastener element.

54. (New) The method of supporting panel members in spaced relation and forming a panel assembly as defined in claim 49, wherein said fastener element comprises a plurality of parts including a first female fastener element, a second female fastener element and a tubular spacer element, said first female fastener element including said first end portion of said fastener element and said second female fastener element including said second end portion of said fastener element and said female fastener elements having a bore therethrough, said method including the following steps:

inserting said first end portion of said first female fastener element in said opening in said one of said panel members and clinching said first end portion;

securing said tubular spacer element to said first female fastener element generally coaxially aligned with said bore through said first female fastener element;

inserting said second end portion of said second female element through said opening through said second of said panel members and clinching said second female fastener element to said second of said panel members; and

securing a second end of said tubular spacer member to said second female fastener element generally coaxially aligned with said bore through said second female fastener element.